

# 'Judge' quietly led CIA through stormy seas

By Bill Gertz  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

William Webster's tenure as CIA director will be remembered for its absence of controversy and for the former judge's leadership of the intelligence community at a time of dramatic international change.

His successor — Deputy National Security Adviser Robert M. Gates is a leading candidate — faces the challenge of continuing to reposition U.S. intelligence agencies for the post-Cold War era while fending off a Congress bent on cutting budgets and imposing its own version of structural reform on the national security bureaucracy.

Known as "the Judge" because of his years on the federal bench, Mr. Webster took over the CIA in 1987 after several stormy years under William Casey, a World War II spy chief who presided over several controversial covert operations.

Former CIA Director Richard Helms said Mr. Webster did an excellent job in guiding the agency during a time of incredible global change, from Moscow to Baghdad.

"He will be remembered as a very thoughtful and prudent director," said Mr. Helms, who headed the agency from 1966 to 1973. "He did settle the agency down after Casey."

"Webster has a judicious character and total integrity," said William Colby, CIA director from 1973 to 1976. "He was just what the doctor ordered."

Mr. Webster, 67, will be remembered as the lawyer with a squeaky-clean image who led the FBI for nine years after the reign of J. Edgar Hoover, then took command of the CIA after the politically charged Iran-Contra affair.

Mr. Webster was considered a calming influence on the agency

after the White House covert operation under Mr. Casey to arm the Nicaraguan rebels, which inevitably fueled criticism of the CIA's covert cadres.

Mr. Colby said the top challenges ahead for the intelligence community will be to initiate reforms that take into account the end of the Cold War and help deal with such problems as international terrorism and weapons proliferation.

Asked about criticism that Mr. Webster was too cautious and overly legalistic in running the CIA, Mr. Helms replied: "That's the kind of charge that was brought against every director. I don't have the impression he ducked any hard choices or responsibilities."

Angelo Codevilla, a former Senate Intelligence Committee staff member, criticized Mr. Webster for missing the opportunity to build a better intelligence system.

"The Webster legacy is really 'steady as she goes,'" said Mr. Codevilla, now with the Hoover Institution. "At a time when U.S. intelligence should have been renovated to take advantage of new opportunities and to remedy long-standing deficiencies, Judge Webster held a steady course."

"The Webster period may well be remembered as the era of stagnation," Mr. Codevilla said.

Mr. Webster, who is nominally chief of all U.S. intelligence agencies, also launched three unique centers — for counterintelligence, counternarcotics and counterterrorism. The centers for the first time joined clandestine service operators and analysts in common operations.

He created a new deputy director post for strategic planning — some-

one solely responsible for anticipating and dealing with intelligence challenges.






Said one administration official close to the CIA: "I think Webster's mark will be that he helped build a very relevant agency that has positioned itself for the 1990s, and an agency that is very accountable."

The Washington Post \_\_\_\_\_  
The New York Times \_\_\_\_\_  
The Washington Times All \_\_\_\_\_  
The Wall Street Journal \_\_\_\_\_  
The Christian Science Monitor \_\_\_\_\_  
New York Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
USA Today \_\_\_\_\_  
The Chicago Tribune \_\_\_\_\_  
Date 9 May 1991

## CONTINUED

5.

**CIA CHIEFS**  
Some of the former directors of the Central Intelligence Agency.

				
<b>William H. Webster</b>	<b>William J. Casey</b>	<b>Adm. Stanefield Turner</b>	<b>George Bush</b>	<b>William E. Colby</b>
Tenure: 1987-91	Tenure: 1981-87	Tenure: 1977-81	Tenure: 1976-77	Tenure: 1973-76
Appointed by: Ronald Reagan	Appointed by: Ronald Reagan	Appointed by: Jimmy Carter	Appointed by: Gerald Ford	Appointed by: Richard Nixon

Source: The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1991